



**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**REPRESENTATIVE GERALDO REYES, JR.**  
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75TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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**Testifying in support of S.B. 477:**  
**An Act Concerning the Public Health of Residents of the State**

**Public Health Committee**

**March 28, 2022**

Co-Chairs Senator Daugherty Abrams and Representative Steinberg, Vice-Chairs Senator Anwar, Senator Kushner and Representative Gilchrest, Ranking Members Senator Hwang, Senator Somers and Representative Petit, and members of the Public Health Committee, I am State Representative Geraldo Reyes, and I represent the 75th House district Waterbury. I am testifying here today in support of S.B. 477: An Act Concerning the Public Health of Residents of the State.

Specifically, I want to talk about Section 7 of S.B. 44, which calls for establishing a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention.

Connecticut has passed some of the nation's strongest gun laws and has one of the lowest overall gun death rates in the country. However, gun violence in Connecticut, especially in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury, is still persistent. **If racism is a public health crisis, so is gun violence. Communities of color bear the brunt of gun violence in Connecticut.** Preventing community gun violence is essential to racial equity, which Connecticut cannot achieve if our communities are not safe.

Gun violence extracts a brutal emotional, physical and financial toll in Connecticut. Consequently, an investment is required to ramp up and expand gun violence intervention strategies in measurable ways, with minuscule costs and maximum impact compared to the annual cost of gun violence. According to calculations from the Giffords Law Center, direct and indirect costs of gun violence in Connecticut totals approximately **\$1.2 billion annually**, including costs associated with healthcare, law enforcement, lost wages and pain and suffering.

Establishing a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention to "coordinate the funding and implementation of evidence-based, evidenced-informed, community-centric gun programs and strategies to reduce community gun violence in the state" is the next step in scaling up our efforts to reduce gun violence in Connecticut.

Ending gun violence in Connecticut, and protecting our children, is a priority without a political party. We must prioritize legislative efforts like S.B. 477, an equity investment, by creating a Commission to oversee funding, tracking, coordination and evaluation for gun violence prevention programs vital to our public health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerald C. Reyes Jr." in a cursive script.

Geraldo Reyes Jr.